COLCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR MEETING

Tuesday, January 9, 2024
6:00 PM
William J. Johnston Middle School
The Commons (Black Box Theater)
360 Norwich Avenue, Colchester

MINUTES

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Alexander Oliphant, Vice-Chair Christopher Rivers, Secretary Margo Gignac, Donna Antonacci, Michelle Millington, Rosemary Gignac (joined at 6:10 PM), Stefanie Tracey-Calash

ADMINISTRATION PRESENT: Superintendent Daniel P. Sullivan, III, Assistant Superintendent Jessica L. Kuckel, William J. Johnston Middle School Principal Christopher Bennett, Bacon Academy Principal Amy Begué

OTHERS PRESENT: Business Director Rachel Linkkila, Executive Assistant to the Superintendent/Board Clerk Heather Petit, Instructional Technology Coordinator lBarbara Johnson, Student Board Member Brooke Dean, William J. Johnston Middle School Teacher Kristina Ngai, Bacon Academy School Psychologist Jessica Perreault

1. MEETING OPENING

1.1 Call to Order
Chair Alexander Oliphant called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM

1.2 Roll Call
Chair Oliphant conducted a roll call of the Board.

1.3 Pledge of Allegiance

2. RECOGNITIONS/ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

2.1 WJJMS Celebrations
Principal Christopher Bennett and Innovations Teacher Kristina Ngai presented on the William J. Johnston Middle School (WJJMS) innovations program. Mr. Bennett celebrated Ms. Ngai on becoming nationally board certified. Ms. Ngai spoke about the program and said it is an elective class at WJJMS. It is required for 6th graders but a choice for 7th and 8th grade students. Ms. Ngai stated that the STEAM team works

collaboratively to offer the best programming for students. Ms. Ngai said the curriculum includes: Maker Skills, Basic Circuitry, and Inventions in Grade 6; Computer Aided Design, 3D Printing, Introduction to Entrepreneurship in Grade 7; and Advanced 3D Design & Making to Help Others, Laser Cutting and Engraving, Introduction to Robotics in Grade 8. Ms. Ngai said the PTO is very supportive and the Innovations program receives many grants for materials and equipment. Ms. Ngai said other offerings at WJJMS include robotics club, invention convention, and community collaborative projects including sensory boards for CES and JJIS, sensory boards for a group home for adults with special needs, customized leashes for K9 officers throughout the state, and enrichment workshops. Ms. Ngai said the team has been asked to host the CT Innovation Collaboration at which they can highlight the WJJMS program. Ms. Ngai said the program has fostered a 20% increase in Tech Ed class enrollment at BA overall and a 40% increase in female students enrolling in Tech Ed courses. Ms. Ngai thanked partners who have awarded the program grants including Pfizer, PEGPETIA, local businesses.

Mr. Bennett said the program has also received drones from grants which students enjoy.

Superintendent Sullivan thanked Ms. Ngai for all of her hard work and congratulated her again on her national certification.

3. STUDENT BOARD MEMBERS REPORT

3.1 Student Board Member Report

Brooke Dean stated that the first semester at Bacon Academy is coming to a close with midterms next week

Girls Basketball has a home game this evening, WJ has their annual Snowball Dance on Thursday.

4. *ADDITIONS/CHANGES TO THE AGENDA

4.1 New Agenda Items

None.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

5.1 For Public Comments, Please See Bylaw on Meeting Conduct

None.

6. REPORT FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

6.1 BA Magnet School Proposal

Ms. Begué presented on the Bacon Academy (BA) Magnet School Proposal. Ms. Begué stated that the magnet school would provide an opportunity to increase enrollment at BA and provide more post diploma opportunities for students who may want to go right into the workforce. Ms. Begué stated that the theme of the magnet school will be the Public

Service Academy of Eastern CT. Ms. Begué thanked Ashley Zaugg, Co-Chair of the BA Magnet Committee, Steve Hoffman and other members of the BA Magnet Committee. Ms. Begué stated that the pathways include fire and public safety, healthcare, education, aviation and Air Force ROTC. Ms. Begué stated that these pathways would align with the Governor's Workforce Initiative. Ms. Begué said that the magnet school will not cost the District any money; the District would partner with the state and pursue a plethora of partnerships in the development and finetuning of these pathways. Ms. Begué said that the state would also be transporting students who choose to attend. Ms. Begué said the proposal includes the construction of a single level metal building hopefully funded by the state. Ms. Begué discussed the anticipated timelines. Ms. Begué spoke to a three year anticipated enrollment, projecting that the District would add 120 students to BA with the state helping with recruitment of some of those students outside of Colchester.

Fire Chief Steven Hoffman stated that this is a wonderful opportunity and he is working with the State of Connecticut on building a 4 year curriculum for the public and fire safety component. Mr. Hoffman said this would help the District access Perkins grants, etc.

Mr. Sullivan stated that there would be a lottery for students who applied whether or not the student is from Colchester or out of District.

Ms. Dean asked if they would be dual-enrolled (receive college credits). Ms. Begué said the District would work toward having the courses college accredited. Ms. Begué said there would still be regular academic requirements; however, they will look at overlap for regular coursework and the magnet courses (i.e. Capstone). Ms. Begué stated the District will define the course requirements very specifically for the magnet school.

Ms. Tracey-Calash asked if there was a scenario where the magnet school was approved but the building was not. Mr. Sullivan said the state would apply to its Department of Administrative Services for funding for the building and the state seems very optimistic that this would be approved. Mr. Sullivan stated that once the building is built, it belongs to the District even if the magnet school portion closes. Mr. Sullivan stated that he would not want to start the program until the District knows that the financial component will be covered by the state. Mr. Sullivan stated that the planned pathways and location are very appealing to the state. Mr. Rivers stated he is excited about the opportunities it gives students and carves the pathway into career opportunities beyond the diploma and potentially to jobs right in Colchester.

6.2 Comprehensive School Threat Assessment Guidelines (CSTAG) Training

Mr. Sullivan stated that many staff in the District received CSTAG training last week and introduced Jessica Perreault, School Psychologist at Bacon Academy. Ms. Perreault presented on CSTAG and the Behavioral Threat Assessment Management (BTAM) component of the training which includes identification, evaluation, and intervention. Ms. Perreault said that CSTAG focuses on a team approach including administrators, mental health staff, SRO, counselors, social workers and psychologists, teachers and

nurses. Ms. Perreault spoke to the two types of threats; transient (not actual intent, joke, exaggeration, etc.) and substantive (serious, intent to harm someone, not easily resolved, protection action needed).

Ms. Perreault said CSTAG offers a lot of guidance including safety plan templates, mental health resources, etc. as well as intervention and identification resources for students that need support.

Mr. Sullivan thanked Ms. Perreault and Officer Scheel for their work on the CSTAG training. Mr. Sullivan stated that it is important for families to know that there is a consistent process that occurs in the District and is grounded in research and training.

Ms. Perreault stated that the training is focused on administrators, school psychologists, social workers, safety officers, special education staff; those working with our students closely. Ms. Perreault stated that if a student expresses wanting to harm themselves, that is handled more by mental health professionals in the school.

6.3 Required Indoor Air Quality Inspections

Andrew Barillari spoke to Indoor Air Quality inspections required by the state which include two forms; 1) checklists that involve pest management, food services, ventilation, etc. and 2) HVAC inspection of all schools. Mr. Barillari stated that the HVAC inspections/testing will be done by an outside vendor such as Trueflow and the first testing will need to be done by 2025. Mr. Barillari stated that the District is in very good shape overall and the checklists will be posted on the website after they are approved and completed. Mr. Rivers stated that there are HVAC needs in the district such as BA. Mr. Rivers asked about the cost of the new mandated inspections. Mr. Barillari said that this cost will be approximately $30,000-$40,000 a building. Mr. Sullivan stated that the CT Association of Public School Superintendents has indicated that there will likely be an extension in regard to when the inspections are due because contractors will be in high demand. Mr. Sullivan said there is some concern after the inspections are completed; if the district does not follow the recommendations from the contractor it could potentially put students/staff at risk; however, the recommendations may also benefit the vendor who would then most likely gain the work to fix the recommendations that they put forth.

7. *APPROVAL OF MINUTES

7.1 *Board of Education Regular Meeting Minutes of December 12, 2023

Motion by: M.Gignac
To approve the minutes as presented.
Second: C.Rivers
Roll call: D.Antonacci sustained; all others in favor.
Vote: Motion carried.

8. REPORTS FROM BOARD COMMITTEES

8.1 Budget Finance Committee

Mr. Rivers spoke to the December monthly budget report and there are no concerns. Mr. Rivers also spoke to the quarterly revenue report. Ms. Linkkila said that the quarterly report is a preliminary format; next quarter it will have only the object codes, which the state tracks across all school districts, and not organization codes.

Mr. Rivers stated that the HVAC grant was submitted and the District will hopefully hear back in March on the submission. Mr. Rivers thanked the Board of Selectmen for holding a special meeting to assist in getting the grant submitted.

Mr. Rivers spoke to the WJJMS building project which was bonded through the state. Mr. Rivers said that Ms. Linkkila has been doing a lot of work to get this moving forward and the project is now in the audit phase. Mr. Rivers stated that afterward the state will reimburse expenses that are applicable (expenses were approximately $5 million for WJJMS and $360,000 for Pupil Services). Ms. Linkkila stated that the Budget Finance Committee will continue to review this every month so it stays in the forefront. Mr. Rivers stated that even though bonding is handled on the townside, the Board wanted it to move forward so enlisted Ms. Linkkila's help to do so.

8.2 Curriculum Committee

Donna Antonacci stated that a meeting was held on December 6, 2023. Ms. Kuckel said the committee worked on the sports medicine curriculum and will have an update for the Board during the time of program review.

8.3 Facilities Committee

Mr. Rivers and Margo Gignac said the Pride and Purpose Facilities Committee is working on a comprehensive plan and overall vision for the District.

8.4 Policy Committee

Ms. Antonacci stated she would like to have a meeting this month to continue working on the 9000 series.

9. BOARD ANNOUNCEMENTS AND INFORMATION ITEMS

9.1 Next Meetings

Budget Finance Meeting: Wednesday, February 7, 2024
Board of Education Regular Meeting: Tuesday, February 13, 2024

9.2 Personnel Report

Mr. Sullivan stated that we have had 12 hires; 2 resignations. Superintendent Sullivan stated the District is still looking for custodians and paraprofessionals and M&J also needs bus drivers.

9.3 Notices of Retirements/Resignations

- Danielle Poirier
- Michelle Marceau

10. PUBLIC COMMENTS

10.1 For Public Comments, Please See Bylaw on Meeting Conduct

Deanna Bouchard, Meadow Drive

Ms. Bouchard asked that the Magnet School presentation be attached online so the citizens can be aware. Ms. Bouchard stated that there are ramifications of adding a magnet school to Bacon Academy. Ms. Bouchard said that the Pride and Purpose committees should have minutes and are required by FOI. Ms. Bouchard said she wanted it to be clear that the money coming back from the bonding project will go to the town and not the Board of Education.

Margo Gignac thanked Mr. Sullivan on behalf of the Board for his first year of service to the District and presented him with a card. Mr. Sullivan thanked the Board and said he was very happy to be in Colchester.

Motion by: M.Gignac
To have a two minute recess
Second: R.Gignac
Roll call: All in favor
Vote: Motion carried

Motion by: A.Oliphant
To return from recess
Second: C.Rivers
Roll call: All in favor
Vote: Motion carried

11. *EXECUTIVE SESSION

11.1 *Local 1303-450 Colchester Office Professionals and Greeters Tentative Agreement 2024-2028 (Discussion proposed for executive session)

Motion by: M.Gignac
To move into executive session for discussion regarding the Local 1303-450 Colchester Office Professionals and Greeters Tentative Agreement; inviting in Superintendent Daniel Sullivan
Second: D.Antonacci
Roll call: All in favor
Vote: Motion carried

Returned to public session at 8:03 PM

12. *POSSIBLE ACTION FOLLOWING EXECUTIVE SESSION

12.1 *Local 1303-450 Colchester Office Professionals and Greeters Tentative Agreement 2024-2028

Motion by: M.Gignac
To approve the Local 1303-450 Colchester Office Professionals and Access Control Attendants Tentative Agreement
Second: M.Millington
Roll call: All in favor
Vote: Motion carried

13. ADJOURNMENT

Motion by: M.Gignac
To adjourn at 8:04 PM
Second: R.Gignac
Roll call: All in favor
Vote: Motion carried

Respectfully submitted,

Heather R. Petit
Executive Assistant to the Superintendent/Board Clerk